

NSC BRIEFING

14 January 1954

POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE RULING
EGYPTIAN OFFICER CLIQUE

Since proclamation of republic in Egypt on 18 June 1953, Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasr has clearly emerged as dominant force in Revolutionary Command Council, group of 12 young officers all under 40 who ousted King Farouk on 23 July 1952. General Nagib, often by-passed as prime minister, is relegated to figurehead in ill-defined post of president of republic.

I. Colonel Nasr's position:

- A. At time of proclamation, Nasr and his three immediate supporters in Command Council assumed open control of Egyptian government and took over cabinet posts of police, propaganda, and military.

1. Nasr, 35 years old, assumed vice premiership and ministry of interior - with control of police.
2. Major Salah Salam, in early 30s, propaganda ministry of national guidance and Sudanese affairs.
3. Wing Commander Abdul Baghdadi, 36 years old, ministry of war.
4. Major Hakim Amir, 33 years old, commander in chief of Egyptian armed forces.

B. Nasr's current power position reflected in fact that he and three close associates conducted negotiations with British during past six months without apparent reference to Nagib.

II. General Nagib's position:

A. General Nagib, 53 years old, chosen just prior to coup on 23 July 1952 as figurehead rather than leader of group young officers organized by Colonel Nasr. Nagib became prime minister on 7 September. Retains that office and became president on 18 June 1953.

1. Nagib, however, has achieved position in own right as result of immense popularity with Egyptian masses who regard him as symbol of ideals of army revolution.

2. Despite recurrent reports that Nasr intends to replace Nagib as prime minister, Nasr faction apparently not yet prepared openly to challenge position of Nagib.

3. Reliable reports from Cairo state Nagib dissatisfied with situation and resents Nasr's increasingly dominant role. General's recent illness, however, has abetted Nasr's efforts to by-pass prime minister.

III. Revolutionary Command Council in full control of Egypt:

A. In addition to holding presidency and premiership, Council members hold six strategic cabinet portfolios: (1) War, (2) Interior

(including police), (3) Communications, (4) National Guidance, (5) Sudanese Affairs, and (6) Social Affairs.

1. Latest cabinet position taken over by RCC is social affairs by 33-year-old Major Kamal Hussein, who is also supervisor of commando training.

B. General Nagib without authority over these officers. Majority believed to acknowledge leadership of Nasr, who possesses personal dynamism and shrewdness, in contrast to Nagib whose strength is personal charm rather than ability as a leader.

Gamal Abdul Nasr may be expected to continue to consolidate his power position at Nagib's expense while exploiting the latter's popularity for public support of regime. No open break anticipated at this time.